repair charges in step **404**. For each disputed repair charge identified in step **404**, a billing exception record is generated in step **406**. In step **408**, the railcar owner determines whether all billing repair cards for a particular time period have been reviewed. If not, the railcar owner returns to step **404** to review the next billing repair card. Once the railcar owner has reviewed all billing repair cards, the method proceeds to step **410** in which the billing exception records are transferred to the billing verification system **100**.

Using the billing verification system **100**, the railcar owner may perform a final review of the billing exception records in step **412**. The railcar owner accesses the billing verification system **100** via a railcar owner graphical user interface. The graphical user interface displays information and allows the railcar owner to interact with the interface by using a pointing device to click on buttons and hypertext links. A similar graphical user interface is provided for the repair agent, as described more fully below.

An example of a railcar owner menu screen display **500** from an exemplary railcar owner graphical user interface is shown in **FIG. 5**. Under the Auditor Review section **502**, the railcar owner may click on hypertext links to select and view billing exception records for various repair agents and time periods. The billing verification system **100**, **200** may contain billing data for all repair agents that perform repairs for the railcar owner. Selecting billing exception records for a particular repair agent and a particular time period preferably causes the railcar owner graphical user interface to display a billing exception header screen display **600**, an example of which is shown in **FIG. 6**. A header area **602** of the display **600** shows summary information relating to the billing repair cards and billing exceptions, including bill number, account date, received date, total bill amount, and total exception amount. A search area **604** provides options for selecting billing exception records that correspond to certain criteria, such as car number, exception amount, and repair location (SPLC). When the railcar owner clicks on the "SEARCH" button **606**, the graphical user interface displays a billing exception record screen display **700**, an example of which is shown in **FIG. 7**. A repair header area **702** of the display **700** shows, among other things, the railcar number,

the date of repair, and the location at which the car was repaired. A repair description area **704** of the display **700** shows line item descriptions of the parts and labor required for the repair. Each repair line item begins with a repair line number that is used to reference billing exceptions. A billing exception area **706** of the display **700** shows exception line item descriptions of any exceptions to the repair charges. The exception line item begins with an exception line number that references the repair line number associated with the repair line item to which an exception is taken. For instance, in the display **700** of **FIG. 7**, an exception is shown for repair line item number seven, which is described as "LABOR, JACK CAR". The exception line item description indicates that an exception is taken because the repair agent provided no justification for jacking the car.

The repair header area **702**, repair description area **704**, and billing exception area **706** preferably are formatted in a manner that complies with the AAR Interchange Rules governing billing repair cards. A navigation area **708** is also included in the billing exception record screen display **700**. By clicking the buttons in the navigation area **708**, the railcar owner is able to navigate between different billing exception records.

If necessary, the railcar owner may attach electronic documentation to support an exception in step **414** of the method illustrated in **FIG. 4**. This may be accomplished by clicking the "MATL", "DUP", or "OTH" hypertext links in the appropriate exception line item of the exception area **706** shown in **FIG. 7**. Clicking these links causes the graphical user interface to display an exception document attachment screen display **800**, an example of which is shown in **FIG. 8**. The railcar owner locates and selects the document to be attached, or enters the location of the document in the path field **802**, and then clicks the attach button **804**. In this way, the railcar owner may attach emails, drawings, reports, and scanned documents to the exception line item. Preferably, the "MATL" hypertext link is used to attach copies of a materials requisition that show the railcar owner already paid for the parts billed. Similarly, when a repair agent inadvertently bills a railcar owner twice for the same repair, the "DUP" link may be used to attach copies of the duplicate

billing repair card. The "OTH" link may be used to attach any other form of supporting documentation.

The hypertext links labeled "MATL", "DUP", and "OTH" in repair line item number seven of the repair description area **704** shown in **FIG. 7** indicate that supporting documentation of all three forms has been attached to the billing exception record associated with that repair line item. Clicking on any of these three links causes the graphical user interface to display the corresponding attached documentation.

In step **416** of the method illustrated in **FIG. 4**, the railcar owner determines whether all necessary documentation has been attached to the billing exception record. If not, additional documentation is attached in step **414**. Once all documentation has been attached, the method proceeds to step **418**, in which it is determined whether all billing exception records have been reviewed. If not, the railcar owner returns to step **412** to review the next billing exception record. Once all billing exception records have been reviewed, the railcar owner releases the billing exception records to the repair agent in step **420** by clicking on the "RELEASE" button **608** shown in the billing exception header screen display **600** of **FIG. 6**. Until this time, the billing exception records are not accessible by the repair agent. Once released in step **420**, however, the billing exception records become available to the repair agent via the billing verification system **100**, and the repair agent is notified of their availability in step **422**. Preferably, the billing verification system **100**, **200** provides notification by generating an electronic mail message and sending the message to the repair agent.

The preceding discussion addressed a transition method of verifying railcar repair charges from the railcar owner's perspective. The transition method is useful for railcar owners as they transition from processing billing exceptions via a mainframe accounting system **116** to processing exceptions solely via a billing verification system **100**, **200**. Once a railcar owner has completely transitioned to the billing verification system **100**, **200**, the method illustrated in **FIG. 4** may be simplified. The first simplification is that steps **402** through **408** may be performed via the billing verification system **100**, **200**